



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-3873  
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

WENDY L. WATANABE  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

ROBERT A. DAVIS  
JOHN NAIMO  
JUDI E. THOMAS

May 12, 2011

TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe  
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **FIVE ACRES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW – A  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Five Acres Foster Family Agency (Five Acres or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provider. The purpose of our review was to determine whether Five Acres was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We completed our review in August 2009 and conducted a follow-up review in October 2010.

DCFS contracts with Five Acres, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster parents for supervising children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program. Five Acres oversees 46 certified foster homes in which 49 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Five Acres is located in the First and Fifth Districts. DCFS paid Five Acres approximately \$1.5 million during Fiscal Year 2009-10.

**Results of Review**

The foster parents indicated that the services they received from Five Acres met their expectations, the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents, and the toddlers we observed appeared well cared for and healthy. In addition, the Agency ensured that social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations. Five Acres also



ensured that staff possessed the required education and work experience, conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract. However, Five Acres did not always ensure that the foster homes complied with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example:

- One (33%) of the three foster homes reviewed in 2009 did not adequately secure knives and prescription medicine. In addition, the home did not have a first aid manual included as part of its first aid kit as required.

During our follow-up review in 2010, the home was decertified by the Agency and the two additional homes reviewed adequately secured knives and prescription medications and had complete first aid kits.

*Five Acres' attached response indicates that their social workers will check the homes during their regular visits and annual inspections.*

- Two (67%) of the three foster parents reviewed in 2009 were not assessed by Five Acres to ensure the foster parents could care for more than two children. At the time of our review, three and five children were placed in the foster homes, respectively.

During our follow-up review in 2010, the two foster parents no longer had more than two children and all three additional foster parents reviewed were assessed to ensure they could care for more than two children.

*Five Acres' attached response indicates that they will complete and document the assessments.*

- Two (33%) of the six children reviewed in 2009 received initial medical and dental examinations late. The medical examinations were 19 days late and their dental examinations were 13 days late. This issue was also noted in our Five Acres contract review report issued on August 20, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all five additional children reviewed received medical and dental examinations timely.

*Five Acres' attached response indicates that they instructed their social workers to review the requirements with the parents.*

- Three (50%) of the six case files reviewed in 2009 did not have documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all five additional case files had documentation of monthly updates.



*Five Acres' attached response indicates that they reviewed the requirement with their social workers and instructed them to document the date and content of the monthly updates.*

Details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with Five Acres on December 21, 2010. In their attached response, Five Acres indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations (Attachment I). We also notified DCFS of the results of our initial and follow-up reviews. In their responses to both reviews (Attachment II), DCFS indicates they will monitor the Agency for compliance with our recommendations.

We thank Five Acres management for their cooperation and assistance during our review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:JET:DC:AA

### **Attachments**

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer  
Jackie Contreras, Ph.D, Interim Director, DCFS  
Thomas Haralambos, Board of Directors Chair, Five Acres  
Robert Ketch, Executive Director, Five Acres  
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee



**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM  
FIVE ACRES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
FISCAL YEAR 2009-10**

**BACKGROUND**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) pays Five Acres Foster Family Agency (Five Acres or Agency) a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on the child's age, Five Acres receives between \$1,430 and \$1,679 per month, per child. DCFS paid Five Acres approximately \$1.5 million during Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10.

**PURPOSE/METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Five Acres was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed Five Acres staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed the children and foster parents. We completed our review in August 2009 and conducted a follow-up review in October 2010.

**BILLED SERVICES**

**Objective**

Determine whether Five Acres provided program services in accordance with their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

**Verification**

We visited three of the 46 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Five Acres billed DCFS and interviewed three foster parents and five children placed in the three homes. We also observed one toddler who was too young to interview. In addition, we reviewed the case files for four foster parents and six children and we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity. During October 2010, we reviewed additional foster homes and children's case files.

**Results**

Five Acres needs to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The Agency also needs to ensure that the children receive medical and dental examinations timely and that Agency social workers provide DCFS social workers with monthly updates. Specifically, we noted the following:



**Foster Home Visitation**

- One (33%) of the three foster homes reviewed in 2009 did not adequately secure knives and prescription medicine. In addition, the home did not have a first aid manual included as part of its first aid kit as required.

During our follow-up review in 2010, the home was decertified by the Agency and the two additional homes reviewed adequately secured knives and prescription medications and had complete first aid kits.

- Two (67%) of the three foster parents reviewed in 2009 were not assessed by Five Acres to ensure the foster parents could care for more than two children. At the time of our review, three and five children were placed in the foster homes, respectively.

During our follow-up review in 2010, the two foster parents no longer had more than two children and all three additional foster parents reviewed were assessed to ensure they could care for more than two children.

**Children's Case Files**

- Two (33%) of the six children reviewed in 2009 received initial medical and dental examinations late. The medical examinations were 19 days late and their dental examinations were 13 days late. This issue was also noted in our Five Acres contract review report issued on August 20, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all five additional children reviewed received medical and dental examinations timely.

- Three (50%) of the six case files reviewed in 2009 did not have documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all five additional case files reviewed had documentation of monthly updates.

**Recommendations****Five Acres management ensure:**

1. **Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 requirements.**
2. **Foster parents adequately secure knives, medication and other items that could pose a potential safety hazard to children.**
3. **Foster homes' first aid kits include a first aid manual.**



4. Foster home assessments are completed for homes where more than two children are placed.
5. Children's medical and dental examinations are conducted timely.
6. DCFS social workers are updated monthly regarding the children's progress.

### **CLIENT VERIFICATION**

#### **Objective**

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Five Acres billed to DCFS.

#### **Verification**

We interviewed five children placed in three of Five Acres' certified foster homes and three foster parents to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS. In addition, we observed one toddler who was too young to interview.

#### **Results**

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from Five Acres met their expectations. In addition, the toddler we observed appeared well cared for and healthy.

#### **Recommendation**

None.

### **STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**

#### **Objective**

Verify that Five Acres social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements and that the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

#### **Verification**

We interviewed Five Acres' administrator and supervising social worker and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.



**Results**

Five Acres' five social workers carried an average of 10 cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised five social workers.

**Recommendation**

None.

**STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS****Objective**

Determine whether Five Acres' staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

**Verification**

We interviewed Five Acres' Human Relations staff and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

**Results**

Five Acres' staff possessed the required education and work experience and the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

**Recommendation**

None.

**PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP****Objective**

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the prior Auditor-Controller monitoring review.

**Verification**

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the FY 2006-07 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on August 20, 2007.



**Results**

The August 20, 2007 monitoring report had two recommendations. The Agency fully implemented one of the recommendations. However, the Agency has not implemented one recommendation from the August 20, 2007 related to ensuring children's medical and dental examinations are conducted timely.

**Recommendation**

7. Five Acres management implement the outstanding recommendation from the August 20, 2007 monitoring report.





**five acres**

THE BOYS' AND GIRLS' AID SOCIETY OF LOS ANGELES

780 W. MOUNTAIN VIEW ST., ALTADENA, CA 91701-4985 (828) 792-6793  
FAX (626) 797-7722 • TTY (626) 565-1893 • [www.fiveacres.org](http://www.fiveacres.org) • email: [far5acres4@earthlink.net](mailto:far5acres4@earthlink.net)

December 24, 2010

County of Los Angeles  
Department of Auditor-Controller  
350 South Figueroa Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90071  
Attention: Ms. Alice Marutani

Re: Monitoring Performance Outcome Review Results  
Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

Dear Ms. Alice Marutani:

The following Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for the agency's review, which took place on July 30, 2009 was submitted to the Auditor Controller's Office on March 9, 2010. The CAP was accepted at this time by the Auditor Controller's Office and Five Acres has continued to implement these items since March 9, 2010.

After reviewing the report from Ms. Alice Marutani, Five Acres is in agreement with the following five findings:

1. One of the three foster homes visited did not adequately secure knives and prescription medicine as required. In addition, the home did not have a first aid manual included as part of its first aid kit as required by CIOSS Title 22 regulations.
2. Two of the three homes reviewed were not assessed by Five Acres to determine the foster parents' ability to effectively care for more than two children prior to placing more than two children in the home. At the time of our review, three children were placed in one home and five children were placed in the second home.
3. Two of the six children reviewed did not receive initial medical and dental examinations within required timeframes. The children's medical examinations were 24 days late and their dental examinations were 13 days late.



4. Three of six case files reviewed did not contain documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.
5. Five Acres management to implement the outstanding recommendation from the Fiscal Year 2006-07 monitoring report.

The following Corrective Action Plan was implemented immediately:

1. Supervisor Sarah Borrero reviewed with placement worker and foster care social workers the Title 22 requirements regarding home inspection items. Placement worker was instructed to review the home before a new child is placed to ensure that the foster homes are up to the requirements. Foster care social workers were instructed to regularly check the certified homes during their home visits to ensure requirements are being met. Additionally, an updated home inspection is to be completed at a minimum on a yearly basis. Specific items that will be looked for during these inspections will include knives and prescription medications being locked up and first aid manuals being located in the first aid kits.
2. Supervisor Sarah Borrero reviewed with placement worker and foster care social workers the protocol to approving a foster home prior to the placement of more than two children in the home. The placement worker and foster care social workers were instructed to complete a foster home capacity assessment prior to more than two children being placed and it's to be reviewed and approved by their supervisor. If approved by their supervisor, the children may be placed and a copy of the foster home capacity assessment is to be filed in both the resource parent and child's file.
3. Supervisor Sarah Borrero reviewed the requirement of all foster children placed to obtain a medical and dental appointment within 30 days of placement with program staff. Foster care social workers were instructed to review with their resource parents the 30 day requirement at the time of their first home visit. If there is a reason for a delay in acquiring the medical and dental appointments this should be documented in progress notes and the needs and services plans.
4. Supervisor Sarah Borrero reviewed with foster care social workers their requirement to document in their home visit notes and needs and services plans that they have made contact with the acting CSWs on their cases on a minimum once a month basis. The foster care social workers were instructed to document not only the date of contact but also the content of that contact.
5. Please see our response to item # 3 above for our plan to implement the outstanding recommendation from the fiscal year 2006-07 monitoring report.



Please note that the above four protocols were presented by Supervisor Sarah Borrego to the FCSWs and Placement Worker during a staff meeting that took place on September 16, 2009 (Please see attached form). In addition, please note that during the Resource Parents meeting on October 1, 2009, the home inspection policy and the medical and dental policy were reviewed with certified resource parents. For those resource parents who did not attend this meeting, the FCSWs assigned to their homes reviewed these policies with them on an individual basis.

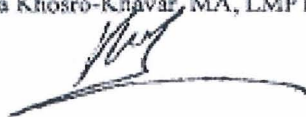
The Auditor Controller's Office came out to Five Acres for a follow up to review on October 5, 2010 wherein children and parent files were both reviewed. Additionally, the reviewed interviewed two current resource families on October 7, 2010. There were no additional findings in the follow up review. Five Acres will continue to successfully implement all of these items from the CAP above.

If you have any questions or need further information, feel free to reach me at 626-246-1736.

Sincerely,

Sarah Borrego, LCSW  
Foster Care Social Worker Supervisor

cc: Vida Khosro-Khavar, MA, LMFT, Assistant Director, Permanency Programs







PATRICIA S. PLOHM, LCSW  
Director

County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Plaza, Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 361-5802

May 26, 2010

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor  
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM: Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head *E. A. Howard*  
Out of Home Care Management Division  
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District  
MARK RISLEY-THOMAS  
Second District  
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District  
DON KNABE  
Fourth District  
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF  
FIVE ACRES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's Contract Review of Five Acres Foster Family Agency was conducted in July/August 2009. The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the Auditor-Controller's March 9, 2010 final draft report of the contract compliance review on March 9, 2010. The DCFS Monitor reviewed the report on March 15, 2010.

The A-C review found no egregious findings which rose to the level of a referral to the Child Protection Hotline. The report, however, noted that one of the three homes visited did not adequately secure knives and prescription medicine and did not have a first aid manual in the first aid kit. According to the A-C exit conference document, the knives and medicines were placed on a very high shelf and were thus inaccessible to the children, but were unlocked. The FFA's Corrective Action Plan (CAP) dated March 9, 2010 indicates that in a staff meeting on September 16, 2009, the FFA Social Workers were instructed to ensure the knives and medicines are locked up, first aid manuals are in the first aid kits during the home inspection before a new child is placed and as needed. This may include checking during their home visits and during the annual home inspection to make sure that the first aid manuals are in the first aid kits.

The A-C report also noted that several case files reviewed were missing required documentation such as the home assessment beyond two children and the FFA's monthly contact with DCFS social workers. The CAP indicated that in the staff meeting on September 16, 2009, the FFA Social Workers were directed to ensure all required documentation is completed and in the case files. Additionally, two of the six sampled children received initial medical exams about 19 days after the initial 30-day period and dental exams approximately two weeks following the 30-day period.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*



**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW FIVE  
ACRES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
PAGE 2**

According to the CAP, the FFA conducted a Resource Foster Parents meeting on October 1, 2009 and reinforced the DCFS policy that all children receive initial medical and dental exams within 30 days from the time that they are placed in the foster home.

The Auditor Controller approved Five Acres FFA's CAP dated March 9, 2010 which included the staff meeting and the foster parents meeting the FFA conducted to address the A-C findings to be in compliance with the Title 22 and County contract requirements.

The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) will conduct a follow-up review to determine full and ongoing implementation of the A-C's recommendations by November, 2010.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

MG:EAH:CC:EK

c: Brian Mahan, CEO, Children & Families Well-Being Cluster  
Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller  
Patricia Ploehn, Director, DCFS  
Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS





Antonio Jimenez, Deputy CEO  
Interim Director

**County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

9320 Telstar Ave., Suite 216, El Monte, California 91731  
(626) 569-6801

January 13, 2011

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor  
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM: Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head  
Out of Home Care Management Division  
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District  
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District  
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District  
DON KNABE  
Fourth District  
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
MAYOR, Fifth District

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF  
FIVE ACRES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's (A-C) Contract Review of Five Acres Foster Family Agency was conducted during July and August 2009. The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the A-C's March 9, 2010 initial draft report of the contract compliance review on March 9, 2010. The DCFS Monitor reviewed the report on March 15, 2010 and provided the response letter to the A-C on May 26, 2010.

The A-C's July and August 2009 review found no egregious findings which rose to the level of a referral to the Child Protection Hotline. The A-C's initial draft report, however, noted that one of the three homes visited did not adequately secure knives and prescription medicine and did not have a first aid manual in the first aid kit. According to the A-C's exit conference document, the knives and medicines were placed on a very high shelf and were thus inaccessible to the children, but were unlocked. The FFA's Corrective Action Plan (CAP) dated March 9, 2010 indicates that in a staff meeting on September 16, 2009, the FFA social workers were instructed to ensure the knives and medicines are locked up and first aid manuals are in the first aid kits during the home inspection before a new child is placed and as needed. This may include checking during their home visits and during the annual home inspection to make sure that the first aid manuals are in the first aid kits. The A-C's initial draft report also noted that several case files reviewed were missing required documentation such as the home assessment beyond two children and the FFA's monthly contact with DCFS social workers. The CAP indicated that in the staff meeting on September 16, 2009, the FFA social workers were directed to ensure all required documentation is completed and in the case files. Additionally, two of the six sampled children received initial medical exams about 19 days after the initial 30-day period and dental exams approximately two weeks following the 30-day period. According to the CAP, the FFA conducted a

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*



**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW FIVE  
ACRES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
PAGE 2**

Resource Foster Parents meeting on October 1, 2009 and reinforced the DCFS policy that all children receive initial medical and dental exams within 30 days from the time that they are placed in the foster home. The A-C approved Five Acres FFA's March 9, 2010 CAP.

On December 21, 2010, the A-C informed OHCMD that they conducted a follow up review during October 2010 to determine the status of their prior findings and provided an updated draft report dated December 21, 2010. The A-C's follow up review reflects that the A-C verified the implementation of their recommendations in all areas of concerns. There are no outstanding findings.

The OHCMD will continue to monitor the Agency's ongoing compliance with the State regulations within six months after the issuance of the A-C's final report.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 589-6804.

KR:EAH:CC:ek

c: David Seidenfeld, CEO, Children & Families Well-Being Cluster  
Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller  
Antonio Jimenez, Interim Director, DCFS  
Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS